

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Norwegian Parliamentary Elections Scheduled for 3
September 1961.

1. Offices to be filled: All 150 seats in the unicameral Norwegian parliament (Storting).

2. Background and principal issues: This is the regular quadrennial election required by the Norwegian constitution. The outcome will depend on the ability of the incumbent Labor party to persuade the electorate that growth in the nation's economy and the present high standard of living derive in large part from its economic and social program. The Labor party has governed Norway since the termination of the wartime national coalition in 1945 and has followed a pragmatic program of economic expansion based on the principles of full employment and social welfare. The party believes that the state should guide the economy and its development with a minimum of actual nationalization. The non-labor parties assert that the cost in terms of heavy taxation and regulation of the business community is excessive and stifles initiative. In addition, they argue that it is time for a change in the administration.

Foreign policy questions and the issue of atomic weapons for Norway's defense are expected to play a minor role in determining the outcome of the election. Public opinion in Norway is generally opposed to the acquisition of nuclear weapons at this time and refuses to permit any country to place such weapons on Norwegian territory. The Labor party, while subscribing to this view, has reserved for the government the right to review the situation periodically in light of international tensions and Norwegian defense requirements. Some non-labor elements, notably in the Conservative party, feel that the government and the Labor party fail to recognize that Norway needs nuclear weapons to defend itself in an atomic war.

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The "Socialist People's party," formed in April, largely out of left-wing dissidents from the Labor party, is seeking to capitalize on the widespread concern of the Norwegian people over an atomic war involving Norway and on their opposition to Norway's acquiring nuclear weapons. It asserts that the government and the Labor party are taking an equivocal position which is not sufficiently opposed to nuclear weapons. The Communists are following a similar line.

3. Present Party Strength

1957 Parliamentary elections

<u>Party</u>	<u>Popular vote</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Seats</u>
<u>Left</u>			
Norwegian Communist Party	60,060	3.38	1
Socialist People's Party	-	-	-
<u>Left-of-Center</u>			
Labor Party	865,675	48.37	78
Social Democrats	2,855	.16	0
<u>Center</u>			
Liberals	171,407	9.55	15
Christian People's Party	183,243	10.22	12
Agrarians (Center Party)	154,761	8.65	15
<u>Right-of-Center</u>			
Conservatives	301,395	16.83	29
Joint Lists	51,360	2.84	0

4. Outstanding personalities:

Gerhardsen, Einar: Prime minister and chairman of the Labor party, Gerhardsen is an astute politician who exercises

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strict control over the party. A moderate, his basic interest is in maintaining and increasing the dominant position of the Labor party. He is essentially pro-NATO.

Lange, Halvard: Foreign minister since 1946, he enjoys a high reputation both in Norway and Scandinavia and among Norway's NATO allies. His health is no longer robust, however, and he may soon be obliged to retire from office.

Bratteli, Trygve: Vice chairman of the Labor party and minister of communications, he is an advocate of a strong defense and is very anti-Communist.

Nordahl, Konrad: Chairman of the powerful Federation of Norwegian Trade Unions (LO), he is the leading spokesman for organized labor. Strongly anti-Communist.

Moe, Finn: Chairman of the parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, he has hoped to become foreign minister. More radical and neutrality-minded than other top leaders in the Labor party, he is considered somewhat erratic.

No opposition party possesses leaders of the stature and experience of the Labor party. The outstanding opposition leaders are:

Emil Lovlien: Chairman of the Communist party and its only representative in parliament.

Seip, Helge: Liberal party representative in parliament and editor of the left-wing semi-neutralist liberal newspaper in Oslo, Dagbladet.

5. Informed Opinion on Election Outcome:

The Labor party will probably maintain a majority in parliament. The Socialist People's party may gain one or possibly two seats--if it obtains the 2.2-percent vote it received in a mid-June Gallup poll--but probably at the expense of the

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Liberal party rather than of the Labor party. Within the Liberal party in the Oslo area, there is a strong radical and neutralist faction which would not vote for the Communists--who are considered Moscow stooges--but which might, in part, swing to the Socialist People's party.

6. Significance for the US:

A Labor party victory would ensure a continuation of Norway's present foreign and defense policies: membership in NATO, no foreign troops or atomic weapons at bases on Norwegian territory, and a modest defense effort with little increase in defense expenditures.

On the other hand, an outstanding showing by the Socialist People's party would indicate a resurgence of neutrality and pacifist sentiment in Norway and would induce the post-election government--most likely still Labor--to pursue an even more modest policy on defense questions.

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